

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 14

By Southerland

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Wilma Dykeman of Newport.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Wilma Dykeman; and

WHEREAS, a noted author, Wilma Dykeman distinguished herself as a writer of the greatest ability and integrity who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Dykeman enjoyed a long and successful career as a writer and is best known for her novels, biographies, and histories depicting the Appalachian South; and

WHEREAS, the author of nearly two dozen books, Wilma Dykeman concerned herself throughout her work with mankind's custodianship of the land and with relations between the races and sexes; and

WHEREAS, a former columnist for the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, Ms. Dykeman's best known works include *The French Broad*, a portrait of the East Tennessee river, and *The Tall Woman*, a novel about a strong-willed mountain woman living in the late nineteenth century; and

WHEREAS, her book, *Neither Black nor White*, an account of Southern race relations written with her husband, James R. Stokely, Jr., won a Sidney Hillman Award as the best book of 1957 on world peace, race relations, or civil liberties; and

WHEREAS, Wilma Dykeman was born in Asheville, North Carolina, on May 20, 1920; she earned a bachelor's degree in speech from Northwestern University in 1940, and married Mr. Stokely that same year; and

WHEREAS, in praising her life and her work, United States Senator Lamar Alexander, who appointed her as State Historian while he was serving as Governor of Tennessee in the 1980s, said that his mother would send him copies of Ms. Dykeman's newspaper column when he was a younger man living away from home, "...to remind me who I was and where I'd come from. She wrote more realistically and proudly than anyone else, and she wrote better about

women than anyone else. A lot of people who write about Appalachia and mountain life either ignore the hardships and tragedies of it or are embarrassed about it. She was neither. She wrote very plainly and cleanly about hard times and family failures."; and

WHEREAS, Wilma Dykeman received numerous honors and awards for her contributions to the literary community, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Humanities Senior Fellowship, an honorary doctorate of literature from Maryville College, the Tennessee Conservation Writer of the Year award, the Tennessee Outstanding Speaker of the Year award, the Distinguished Service Award from the University of North Carolina, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Knoxville Writers Guild; and

WHEREAS, wholly dedicated to her profession and her community, Ms. Dykeman was a member of the Board of Trustees at Berea College and a member of P.E.N. International, Phi Beta Kappa, the Authors Guild, the Authors League of America, the Southern Historical Association, the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, the East Tennessee Historical Society, and the Tennessee Historical Society, and served as Tennessee State Historian for many years; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Dykeman was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Wilma Dykeman enjoyed the loving companionship of her husband, James R. Stokely, Jr., who preceded her in death, she is survived by their two sons, Dykeman Stokely and James R. Stokely III, and two grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Dykeman leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional author and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Wilma Dykeman, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character, stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction, and her enduring legacy as a writer and historian.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Wilma Dykeman.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.